

Junior 4-H Story

My name is Four H. Member. I am ten years old. I live on a dairy farm right outside of Church Hill with my mom, dad, and fourteen year old brother.

I have taken piano for three yeas and started learning to play the flue in Centreville Middle School.

This year I was in beginning band.

We all have to work on our family farm. I help my mother on school nights feed the calves. On Saturday and Sunday evenings I help my dad in the stable. My job is to wash the cow's udders to get them ready to milkers. I also dip the cow's teats in teat shield when the milkers come off. I like some of our cows better than others.

My dad bought me a registered Holstein calf in 1984. It was to young to be in 4-H. I started showing her in the little britches contest. In 1986 I joined cloverleaf 4-H Club. I took Fay to the fair in 1986, and she won second place.

Last year my dad bought me another registered calf. Her name was Granny. Both Fay and Granny went to the Queen Anne's Fair in 1987. Fay won first place and Granny won fourth place. I think that is very good Also, Fay calved for the second time in August, and she had a heifer calf. I now own three animals of my very own!

4-H is a lot of fun and I hope to stay in it for a long time!

Intermediate 4-H Story

Now you might look at my summary record and think I'm not carrying a lot of 4-H projects, but believe me, I'm a busy girl.

My name is Four H. Member. I am 12 years old and this is my 4th year in 4-H, and my 4th Record Book.

I live on a dairy farm one mile south of Church Hill, Md. My family and I milk 110 cows. We have about 250 animals in all. Our cows are grade Holsteins, with the exception of my brother's 4 registered ones and my 4 registered ones for our 4-H projects.

My brother and I are the first in our family to show animals. When he joined 4-H 6 years ago my dad bought each of us a heifer calf. I was only 7 years old. That is too young for 4-H, but Dad let me take Fay to the Queen Anne's County Fair. I got to show her in "Little Britches Fitting & Showing" and the Open Class Show. I was hooked on showing!

In two years time I was old enough to join 4-H. By then Fay had had her 1st calf. I'm not sure who led who around the show ring that year! Fay was my first and best 4-H project.

In the spring of 1987, Dad bought me my second heifer calf. I told him I wanted a December calf so the date would be good for showing. Her name is Granny.

In August of 1987 Fay calved for the 2nd time and she had a heifer. I am so proud of J&A Hallmark Falcon Fantasy. So far, she is my only animal with my prefix.

In March of this year we went to Hunter's Sale Barn, Rising Sun, MD and the Eastern Shore Showcase Holstein Calf Sale. I was allowed to pick out one calf to buy. I paid for her myself with the money my parents pay me for helping with the milking and feeding calves. I tried to remember all that I had learned from dairy judging practices to help me make the right choice. Ashley's dairy

character and general appearance really won me over. She is a twin, but she has a strong top line and straight legs. I think she will be a profitable cow one day.

Like I said, I've been busy this year. From February 2nd to April 24th I attended the weekly learning sessions for the county Dairy Bowl Contest. I never knew you could learn so much about cows! We studied digestion, reproduction, milk production, nutrition, herd health, and dairy foods. My favorite lesson was about reproduction. When our group went to Kennedyville for a district practice, a vet from the University of Maryland brought a real reproductive tract. It was great to see the real thing! It was also an experience to judge hay. I learned all about choosing the best hay for the most nutrition. I also learned that it is not wise to give dry cows alfalfa hay because it is too rich in calcium and might cause milk fever. The sessions got fun when we had practice with the buzzers. I was happy when I was chosen for our county team. Our team went to the State Dairy Bowl on April 29th at the University of Maryland. We competed against 6 teams and won 5th place. We'll be ready for them next year!

On April 14th Dairy Judging Practice started. I attended as many practices as I could. When our county contest was held at the 4-H Fair in August, I won 3rd place for Juniors. I did good enough to make the county team. On September 2nd our team went to the State contest at Maryland State Fair. I was so excited! This was the first time I'd been on the county team and the first time I'd ever been to the state fair. Our team did very good and finished second in Junior Division. I was low man on the team. I hope to improve my judging next year.

For the first time since I've been in 4-H, I was able to attend the 4-H District Spring Show. I chose to show Ashley, my heifer I bought in March. When I got into the ring, I saw that she was not one of the larger heifers. I am still confident that she will be a good cow.

The best time of the year for me is the week of the Queen Anne's County Fair. I chose to take Fay, my aged cow and Ashley, my heifer. I left Granny home because she didn't have a good general appearance, and I left Fantasy home because she was a 2-year old but had not calved yet. It is a lot of work getting them ready. I washed my animals and led them on a halter every day for two weeks

before the fair. My 4-H leader advised me on clipping. Dad helped with hoof trimming, and I did the rest including cleaning those two big ears. I hope to be able to do all the preparing by myself soon.

County fair is a wonderful time. It is fun to be with my other 4-H friends who are showing. We all help each other in our barn to keep it looking good for the visitors.

When school started in late August, I returned to Centreville Middle School as a 7th grader. I am in the band and I play flute.

Now I'm busy getting all my records together for my Record Book. Keeping records on my 4-H projects has taught me that there is a lot of money spent on an animal before she ever produces milk. I've learned that it is best to keep a cow in the herd as long as she is healthy and productive so she can pay you back.

I would say the most exciting things about my 4-H work this year was buying my own animal, going to State Fair for the 1st time, and picking sires to breed to my animals.

The most disappointing was that all 3 of my cows had bull calves.

What I'd like to improve most next year is my placing in the Fitting & Showing Contests.

Senior 4-H Story

How do I tell a story of nine wonderful years of my life; going from a shy little girl to a self-confident young woman; of setting goals and fulfilling dreams? Well, it all began the day I joined 4-H!

I am 17 years old and a member of the Cloverleaf Dairy 4-H Club. I am a 12th grade student at Queen Anne's County High School. At school, I am an Honor Roll student, active in Senior Class Activities, and a member of the National Honor Society. This year I was also named as a Maryland Distinguished Scholar and a Governor's Summer Scholar. I was chosen to attend the one week program "Explore Ag '94" held at the University of Maryland's College of Agriculture.

I live with my parents on a 350-acre dairy farm just outside Church Hill, Maryland. This farm has been in my family for over 150 years. We are currently milking 120 Holstein cows. All our cows are grade, except for my 4-H projects. I am down to the barn daily during the summer and school breaks, and on the weekends during the school year. At times, when Dad is in the fields, it is just me and one hired man doing the milking.

My interest in cows naturally began at an early age. In 1984, my father brought two Registered Holstein calves at a neighbor's sale. One was to be for my brother who had just joined 4-H, and the other was for me. Dad let Jamie choose first. Of course, he chose the calf that cost the most, thinking she would be the best. I got the other one, Fay, who happened to have the same birthday as mine, April 5th!

I was too young for 4-H, but Fay went to the County Fair anyway. I got to show her for two years in the "Little Britches" Fitting & Showing contests. Then, in 1986, I became a 4-H member and got to show her in my first 4-H Show. Boy, had she grown a lot more in those two years than I had! I don't know who led who around the showing, but I was hooked on showing.

I began 4-H with one animal; to date, I have owned 24 Registered Holsteins. In the nine years of 4-H showing, I have placed on the top, on the bottom, and everywhere in between. I have exhibited 12 of my 24 projects in county, district, or state shows. My original project, Fay, was shown at ten consecutive County Fairs.

1990 was a good year in showing for me. To my surprise, Fay was chosen Grand Champion at the County Fair 4-H Holstein Show. We then competed with the other breed winners, and she was chosen Supreme Champion. This was a wonderful honor for me. I received a huge trophy that had

been donated in memory of Cloverleaf 4-H Club's late leader, Mr. Billy Kimbles. It is the showing award I treasure the most.

It took me 5 years to come out on top in the Fitting & Showing competition at County Fair. In 1990, I won the Intermediate class. In 1992, I was named the Senior and Grand Champion. I then had to compete with the previous Grand Champ to determine the Sweepstakes Winner. I will always remember the judge's comment, "I would be proud to have either of these two young people show my animals". I didn't win, but what an honor to know I was doing everything right. I still have not attained the Sweepstakes in Fitting & Showing, but I'll keep trying.

Early on, I was responsible for halter breaking and washing each of my show animals. As I got older, I did more and more of the fitting. Today, I do all the clipping and fitting myself.

Some other skills I have learned through the 4-H diary project work are: filling out registration papers, detecting cows in heat, diagnosing some diseases and disorders, delivering calves, assisting the vet, and giving medications. The task I most enjoy at our dairy is selecting the A.I. bulls to be bred to our cows. It gives me great satisfaction that my Dad has enough confidence in my knowledge of cows, that he accepts my judgments in this very important responsibility in dairying. Also, this year, I finally talked my Dad into using DHI services. I have been telling him for several years that we really needed to use this important management tool.

During my years of raising and showing cows, I have experienced many emotions. I have had the joy of seeing many of my projects born, and have nursed a few sick ones back to good health. I have experienced the pride of halter breaking each of my calves, and more recently doing my own clipping. And, I have also known the sadness of culling and losing my older projects. 1993 was especially sad for me when Fay, my first 4-H animal died unexpectedly one month before calving. I lost a good show animal and a good friend.

Dairy Judging has always been an important part of my 4-H activities. Each year county practices are held weekly June thru August in preparation for the District and State contests. I began judging in 1987. By 1989, I had earned a spot on my County's Junior Team, and got to compete at the State Contest at the Maryland State Fair. In 1990 and 1991, I made the County Intermediate Team.

Each year my judging and oral reasons kept improving. 1992 was the first year for me to judge as a Senior. This is when the competition really heats up as there are out-of-state trips to be won. To my surprise at the State Contest I had finished in the top 12, which enabled me to try for a

spot on the 2 State Teams. I stayed at the State Fair for two more days judging and giving oral reasons. When the results were announced, I had earned a spot on the Maryland B-Team that would represent Maryland at the Dairy Cattle Judging Contest at the North American International Livestock Expo.

At the regional contest in Louisville, Ky., our team finished first, and also won three breeds and oral reasons. The only regret I had was that my scores were the lowest of our four-member team, so they were not counted in the team score. That experience gave me an opportunity to participate in a large contest, and I knew I wanted to be a part of the Maryland A-Team before my 4-H days were over. Little did I know that I would achieve that goal so quickly.

Again, in 1993 I was a part of my County's Senior Judging Team. At the State Contest, I finished in 10th place, not as good as I had hoped for, but still good enough to try for the State A-Team. I stayed over again for the two days of workouts. On Monday afternoon when the results were read, I held my breath. And then, my name was announced for A-Team. What a high! I was going to judge at the 4-H National Dairy Cattle Judging Contest at the World Dairy Expo.

The nine-day trip to Madison, Wisconsin was FANTASTIC!!! At the contest, I really wanted to do my very best. I concentrated on those 10 classes of animals so hard and tried to present good solid reasons. That evening at the Awards Banquet, I was not the least bit surprised that our talented team finished in 2nd place; but, I was in total shock when I was named the High Individual Overall. What a way to end my 4-H Dairy Judging career!!!

Did I say end---well not quite. This year I was asked by our two county coaches to join them in training our County teams. What an honor!

I took my assignment seriously. In May, I presented an instructional slide show on Dairy Judging. Weekly practices began in late June, and I attended as many as possible. I really enjoyed helping the younger 4-H'ers analyze the cows and develop good oral reasons. I sincerely hope each one of them gets the same wonderful opportunities that I have had.

Another dairy activity I have participated in is Dairy Quiz Bowl. County practices are held weekly during the winter months to prepare for the State Contest in the Spring. We learn a wide variety of information all pertaining to bovines and the dairy industry.

1989 was my first year to participate at the State Contest, and was it an eye-opening experience for me. Our team really got shut out. I was the only member to respond to any questions, and that was only two. I got one right and one wrong! I was amazed how the other county teams

could reply so quickly and accurately. I made my mind up if they could learn to do that, then I could too!

Our County Team did improve in 1990, and we finished 2nd in the Intermediate Division. By 1992, I was in the Senior Division of competition. Our team finished 4th that year, and I was lucky enough to be the High Individual. The funny thing was that the Dairy Bowl trophy had a beef on it instead of the dairy cow!

In 1993 and again this year, our County sent teams to the State Contest. Our Senior Team went with the handicap of having only three members instead of four, but we buzzed our way to the top both years. I had accumulated enough points to be the High Individual both years also. Because I had been a member of our State's Dairy Judging Teams the two previous years, I was ineligible to be on the State Dairy Quiz Bowl, but 1994 was my year to go back to Louisville, Kentucky. To compete at the National Contest.

Practices for the State Dairy Bowl Team began in September, and I had to travel 140 miles round trip for each practice. Mom says we put over 1,000 miles on our car, and eat over two dozen McDonald's burgers for this activity.

By early November, our team was ready to take on our challengers. I was chosen Captain by my teammates. At the contest, we were able to play five rounds before being eliminated. When all was said and done, Maryland finished 6th place out of 22 teams.

While my participating in Dairy Bowl is over, I will, as I have for the past two years, help coach our County teams.

Another State contest I have successfully participated in is the Jr. Dairyman Contest held during the Maryland State Fair. In 1992 I finished in 4th place, and in 1993 I was the 1st place winner, making me ineligible to compete again.

4-H Public Speaking has been an asset to me. I have participated in my Club's contest each year. I have always given prepared speeches or radio announcements on dairy related topics. I have been a County winner each year since 1991, and have competed on the State level two times.

I feel that 4-H Public Speaking has helped me greatly in many ways. Besides competing in the contests, these experiences have helped me improve oral presentations at school and before adult groups. I have always felt that my Public Speaking training helped me in Dairy Judging by giving me the self-confidence to prepare and present oral reasons.

Last year after winning the National Dairy Judging contest, I was asked to speak at several Dairy Association meetings. It wasn't hard for me to fulfill their requests as I love talking about my Madison trip, and my Public Speaking training had enabled me to prepare and deliver a short summary with ease.

Again this training paid off this year, when I competed in the County and State Farm Bureau Farm Queen contests. The State contest was judged heavily on public speaking ability, and I did fine, finishing as the state's 3rd Runner-up.

In the Junior Leadership project, I try to be as active as time permits. I have served as President of my local Club for three years, two of which our Club was recognized as a Maryland Outstanding 4-H Club. In my nine years I have served on many Club committees including: Booth, Fair Entries, Health Fair Display and Christmas Float. I have also been an M.C. for our county achievement night.

For the past two years, I have represented my county on the District Spring Dairy Show committee. Our jobs included: picking a judge, dividing classes, choosing awards, and writing letters for donations to our show.

A good deal of my leadership experiences has come from coaching the younger 4-H members in Dairy Judging and Dairy Bowl. I have also led workshops for fitting & showing and record books.

The most important part of being a good leader is to be a good role model, which I believe I am. I thank 4-H for keeping my mind and hands busy and helping mold me into the person I am today.

Completing Record books for 4-H has been very rewarding for me. My 1989, '90, '92, and '93 Record books were chosen winners by the Maryland Holstein Association.

Keeping records has taught me the complexities of the dairy economy. I learned early on that a lot of money is spent on a heifer before she ever starts returning it with milk. I feel my little herd is an asset to our family's herd.

Looking back over the nine years I have been involved in 4-H, I am proud of all that I have experienced and accomplished. The memories and friendships I have made will last a lifetime.

I have participated in many 4-H activities, and have been very successful. I would not have achieved so much without the help and support of my parents, leaders, and coaches. In the beginning, I didn't start out on the top. I wasn't always the best judge, showman, or public speaker,

but I kept listening to advice, observing others, and didn't give up. I came to understand that success does not fall into your lap; a person must work for it. I also believe once you have mastered a skill, you should be willing to pass your knowledge on to others who are eager to learn.

This being the fall of my senior year in high school, I have been busy with college applications and scholarship forms. Most ask for an essay about something important in your life. I didn't have to think hard to know that I would write about the impact 4-H has had on my life. The life skills and knowledge acquired through 4-H will be an asset to me whatever I choose to do in the future.